/59 cont./
the bloody element, which for all primitive people and for all children is a synomym for vigor, spirit, and health. This step is really critical; frequently it is feared, it is surrounded with mystery, and in many cases even goes so far as to produce hysteria and mental disorders; and it is frequently the point of departure for many disturbances both organic and moral. Thus, in both senses did Father Vilariño, S. J., say that the age between 14 and 24 years was the decade of death.

125. The Pemón distinguish in a girl three ages: true girlhood, in which she is muré; an intermediate one, in which she is /60/ manak-dakán, when her breasts are about to appear; and puberty, in which she is auroni-pué, in which menstruation has occurred.

126. This third age is one of confinement and diet for a more or less long period. The Pemón do not build special ranchos apart for these pubescent girls, but small apartments within the common house itself, or, more exactly, garrets as in high habitations. It seems that formerly the confinement and diet were more rigorous and prolonged; now they are only observed in the two or three first manifestations of menstruation.

According to notes of my native collaborator, Ernesto Pinto Armellada, which I have before me, among the principal foodstuffs prohibited to pubescent girls were moriche worms, turkey hens, deer, etc., in order to avoid bad childbirth; in addition, salt and sweetness, so that their teeth will not be damaged, since it is already known that "formerly women chewed kachirí."

127. The object of this confinement is not making them pale nor to keep them away from men's glances, but to preserve them from the assaults of lustful or lovesick spirits, such as amariuak, rató, mayikó, rató, etc.

When detailing the observances prescribed by the ancients for this age in women, it is said that:

a) they must lie down in the hammock in the straightest position possible;